

shrewdness of his countrymen. The same story is told of the foundation of the Arakan empire by the younger of two brothers who came from India.

But it is in the relations with the milder-natured tribes, such as the Karens and Chins, or the small if warlike septs such as the Kachins, that the Burman most comes up to the truculence of the Mahā Yazawin. Out of the northern Kachins—bold robber bands, armed with queer, home-made, stockless guns—little was to be gained. They lived on the hills, and owned nothing but pigs; but they raided on low-land villages, and the Burmans retaliated, and there were periodic seasons of mutual crucifixion. Long ago these clans had the reputation of kindly hospitality, but Burmese tyranny made most of them dangerous savages. It is different with the Karens and Chins. The former, a heavy, plethoric people, endure their wrongs with dull indifference, all but the fierce Red Karens, who kept up a perpetual guerilla warfare, after the manner of the Kachins. The Karens account for their wrongs in the following way. When Yüwa created the world he took three handfuls of earth and threw them round about him. From one sprang the Burmans, from another the Karens, and from the third the Kalās, the foreigners. The Karens were very talkative and made more noise than all the others, and so the Creator believed that there were too many of them; and he threw another half handful to the Burmans, who thus gained such a supremacy that they soon overcame the Karens, and have oppressed them ever since.

The Chins were subjected to such long-continued and systematic ill-treatment on the part of the Burmese, that traditions accounting for this oppression actually form a part of the national religion. All mankind, they say, is descended from a woman called Hlinyu, who laid 101 eggs, from the last laid of which sprang the Chins. Hlinyu loved the youngest best; but he had gone away, and before she found him again the whole world except bleak mountain-ranges had been partitioned out among her other children. So the Chin first man got the hills, and as compensation was given elephants, horses, cattle, goats, pigs, and fowls. Unfortunately, Hlinyu appointed the Burman brother to

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the right of land tenure should always have been so fixed and certain. The fondness with which the people cling to their ancestral lands has something of almost religious fervour in its tenacity. As long as a family remains in the neighbourhood of their inheritance nothing will persuade them to give up their connection with it. In Upper Burma, to the present day, land is never sold as the term would be understood in Europe. The transaction which goes by the name of a sale is, in reality, a kind of mortgaging, or, more exactly, pawning, if such a term can be used with regard to land.

The estate passes from one occupant to another for a certain sum of money, and it is clearly understood that if at any time the original owner is in a position to reclaim his property he may do so whether the purchaser likes it or not. Farther than this even, the buyer cannot sell the land to a third party without first obtaining the consent of its former owner. Notwithstanding this feeling, however, it is seldom that a property can be found which has remained for any considerable length of time in the same family. This is owing to the constant rebellions and wars between Peguans and Burmese and Shans, which afflicted the country for five hundred years. All those who were not killed were driven away from their former homes by ruthless invaders or were drafted off to fight for the king. In the short intervals of peace rival governors, in desperation for means to raise the revenues expected from their provinces, would tempt people away from their former homes by the offer of rewards or a reduction of body service. Thus in some cases the proprietors were killed out, in others they left for districts so remote that it was impossible to retain a hold on the ancestral property, however great their attachment to it. As an illustration of the sanctity attaching to ownership of land, the law concerning church lands may be quoted from Buddhaghosha's Parables: "Whoso shall take for himself or for another wutmye, consecrated or glebe-land, shall become a mite, or a white ant upon that sacred ground for the whole of 100,000 cycles."

The eighteenth of the original eighteen laws given by Manu to the king refers to the partition of property, and an elaboration of this points out sixteen descriptions of children who cannot claim a portion of their parents' property. The

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000 situation with regard to other nations, its climate, its occupations. It is a great subject that I cannot go into. I wish to take all such things as I find them, and to discuss only the effect of the religion upon the courage of the people, upon its fighting capabilities. That religion may have a very serious effect one way or the other, no one can doubt. I went through the war of annexation, from 1885 to 1889, and from it I will draw my examples.

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When we declared war in Upper Burma, and the column advanced up the river in November 1885, there was hardly any opposition. A little fight there was at the frontier fort of Minhla, but beyond that nothing. The river that might have been blocked was open; the earthworks had no cannon, the men no guns. Such a collapse was never seen. There was no organization, no material, no money. The men wanted officers to command and teach them; the officers wanted authority and ability to command. The people looked to their rulers to repel the invaders; the rulers looked to the people. There was no common intelligence or will between them. Everything was wanting; nothing was as it should be. And so Mandalay fell without a shot, and King Thibaw, the young, incapable, kind-hearted king, was taken into captivity.

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That was the end of the first act, brief and bloodless. For a time the people were stupefied. They could not understand what had happened; they could not guess what was going to happen. They expected that the English would soon retire, and that then their own government would reorganize itself. Meanwhile they kept quiet.

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It is curious to think how peaceful the country really was from November 1885 till June 1886. And then the trouble came. The people had by that time, even in the wild forest villages, begun to understand that we wanted to stay, that we did not intend going away unless forced to. They felt that it was of no further use looking to Mandalay for help. We had begun, too, to consider about collecting taxes, to interfere with the simple machinery of local affairs, to show that we meant to govern. And as the people did not desire to be governed—certainly not by foreigners, at least—they began to organize resistance. They looked to their local leaders for help, and, as too often these local governors were not very capable men, they sought, as all people have done, the assistance of such men of war as they could find—brigands, and freelances, and the like—and put themselves under their orders. The whole country rose, from Bhamo to Minhla, from the Shan Plateau to the Chin Mountains. All Upper Burma was in a passion of insurrection, a very fury of rebellion against the usurping foreigners. Our authority was confined to the range of our guns. Our forts were attacked, our convoys ambushed, our steamers fired into on the rivers. There was no safety for an Englishman or a native of India, save within the lines of our troops, and it was soon felt that these troops were far too few to cope with the danger. To overthrow King Thibaw was easy, to subdue the people a very different thing.

It is almost impossible to describe the state of Upper Burma in 1886. It must be remembered that the central government was never very strong

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—in fact, that beyond collecting a certain amount of taxes, and appointing governors to the different provinces, it hardly made itself felt outside Mandalay and the large river towns. The people to a great extent governed themselves. They had a very good system of village government, and managed nearly all their local affairs. But beyond the presence of a governor, there was but little to attach them to the central government. There was, and is, absolutely no aristocracy of any kind at all. The Burmese are a community of equals, in a sense that has probably never been known elsewhere. All their institutions are the very opposite to feudalism. Now, feudalism was instituted to be useful in war. The Burmese customs were instituted that men should live in comfort and ease during peace; they were useless in war. So the natural leaders of a people, as in other countries, were absent. There were no local great men; the governors were men appointed from time to time from Mandalay, and usually knew nothing of their charges; there were no rich men, no large landholders—not one. There still remained, however, one institution that other nations have made useful in war, namely, the organization of religion. For Buddhism is fairly well organized—certainly much better than ever the government was. It has its heads of monasteries, its Gaing-dauks, its Gaing-oks, and finally the Thathanabaing, the head of the Burmese Buddhism. The overthrow of King Thibaw had not injured any of this. This was an organization in touch with the whole people, revered and honoured by every man and woman and child in the country. In this

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terrible scene of anarchy and confusion, in this death peril of their nation, what were the monks doing?

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We know what religion can do. We have seen how it can preach war and resistance, and can organize that war and resistance. We know what ten thousand priests preaching in ten thousand hamlets can effect in making a people almost unconquerable, in directing their armies, in strengthening their determination. We remember La Vendée, we remember our Puritans, and we have had recent experience in the Soudan. We know what Christianity has done again and again; what Judaism, what Mahommedanism, what many kinds of paganism, have done.

To those coming to Burma in those days, fresh from the teachings of Europe, remembering recent events in history, ignorant of what Buddhism means, there was nothing more surprising than the fact that in this war religion had no place. They rode about and saw the country full of monasteries; they saw the monasteries full of monks, whom they called priests; they saw that the people were intensely attached to their religion; they had daily evidence that Buddhism was an abiding faith in the hearts of the people. And yet, for all the assistance it was to them in the war, the Burmese might have had no faith at all.

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The explanation is, that the teachings of the Buddha forbid war. All killing is wrong, all war is hateful; nothing is more terrible than this destroying of your fellow-man. There is absolutely no getting free of this commandment. The teaching of the Buddha is that you must strive to make your

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795 own soul perfect. This is the first of all things, and
642 comes before any other consideration. Of the virtues
721 that only war can create and nourish this teaching
[792] knows nothing. Be pure and kind-hearted, full of
charity and compassion, and so you may do good to
others. These are the vows the Buddhist monks
make, these are the vows they keep; and so it
happened that all that great organization was useless
to the patriot fighter, was worse than useless, for it
was against him. The whole spectacle of Burma in
175 those days, with the country seething with strife, and
722 the monks going about their business calmly as ever,
772 begging their bread from door to door, preaching of
peace, not war, of kindness, not hatred, of pity, not
revenge, was to most foreigners quite inexplicable.
They could not understand it. I remember a friend
of mine with whom I went through many experiences
speaking of it with scorn. He was a cavalry officer,
'the model of a light cavalry officer'; he had with
him a squadron of his regiment, and we were trying
to subdue a very troubled part of the country.

We were camping in a monastery, as we frequently did—a monastery on a hill near a high golden pagoda. The country all round was under the sway of a brigand leader, and sorely the villagers suffered at his hands now that he had leapt into unexpected power. The villages were half abandoned, the fields untilled, the people full of unrest; but the monasteries were as full of monks as ever; the gongs rang, as they ever did, their message through the quiet evening air; the little boys were taught there just the same; the trees were watered and the gardens swept as if there were no change

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711 Religion meant to him something that would
721 help you in your trouble, that would be a stay and
a comfort, a sword wherewith to confront your
enemies and a prop for yourself. Though he was
himself an invader, he felt that the Burmans did no
wrong in resisting him. They fought for their
homes, as he would have fought; and their religion,
if of any value, should assist them. It should urge
them to battle, and promise them peace and happiness
if dying in a good cause. His faith would do this
for him. What was Buddhism doing? What help
did it give to its believers in their extremity? It
gave none. Think of the peasant lying there in
the ghostly dim-lit fields waiting to attack us at
the dawn. Where was his help? He thought,
perhaps, of his king deported, his village invaded,
his friends killed, himself reduced to the subject of
a far-off queen. He would fight—yes, even though
his faith told him not. There was no help there.
His was no faith to strengthen his arm, to straighten
his aim, to be his shield in the hour of danger.

If he died, if in the strife of the morning's fight
he were to be killed, if a bullet were to still his
heart, or a lance to pierce his chest, there was no
hope for him of the glory of heaven. No, but every
fear of hell, for he was sinning against the laws of
righteousness—'Thou shalt take no life.' There is
no exception to that at all, not even for a patriot
fighting for his country. 'Thou shalt not take the
life even of him who is the enemy of your king and
nation.' He could count on no help in breaking the
everlasting laws that the Buddha has revealed to us.
If he went to his monks, they could but say: 'See

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the law, the unchangeable law that man is subject to. There is no good thing but peace, no sin like strife and war.' That is what the followers of the great teacher would tell the peasant yearning for help to strike a blow upon the invaders. The law is the same for all. There is not one law for you and another for the foreigner; there is not one law to-day and another to-morrow. Truth is for ever and for ever. It cannot change even to help you in your extremity. Think of the English soldier and the Burmese peasant. Can there be anywhere a greater contrast than this?

Truly this is not a creed for a soldier, not a creed for a fighting-man of any kind, for what the soldier wants is a personal god who will always be on his side, always share his opinions, always support him against everyone else. But a law that points out unalterably that right is always right, and wrong always wrong, that nothing can alter one into the other, nothing can ever make killing righteous and violence honourable, that is no creed for a soldier. And Buddhism has ever done this. It never bent to popular opinion, never made itself a tool in the hands of worldly passion. It could not. You might as well say to gravity, 'I want to lift this stone; please don't act on it for a time,' as expect Buddhism to assist you to make war. Buddhism is the unalterable law of righteousness, and cannot ally itself with evil, cannot ever be persuaded that under any circumstances evil can be good.

And so the Burmese peasant had to fight his own fight in 1885 alone. His king was gone, his government broken up, he had no leaders. He had

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721 no god to stand beside him when he fired at the
175 foreign invaders; and when he lay a-dying, with a
701 bullet in his throat, he had no one to open to him
the gates of heaven.

And yet he fought—with every possible discouragement he fought, and sometimes he fought well. It has been thrown against him as a reproach that he did not do better. Those who have said this have never thought, never counted up the odds against him, never taken into consideration how often he did well.

[411] Here was a people—a very poor people of peasants—with no leaders, absolutely none; no aristocracy of any kind, no cohesion, no fighting religion. They had for their leaders outlaws and desperadoes, and for arms old flint-lock guns and soft iron swords. Could anything be expected from this except what actually did happen? And yet they often did well, their natural courage overcoming their bad weapons, their passionate desire of freedom giving them the necessary impulse.

In 1886, as I have said, all Burma was up. Even in the lower country, which we held for so long, insurrection was spreading fast, and troops and military police were being poured in from India.

There is above Mandalay a large trading village—a small town almost—called Shemmaga. It is the river port for a large trade in salt from the inner country, and it was important to hold it. The village lay along the river bank, and about the middle of it, some two hundred yards from the river, rises a small hill. Thus the village was a triangle,

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with the base on the river, and the hill as apex. On the hill were some monasteries of teak, from which the monks had been ejected, and three hundred Ghurkas were in garrison there. A strong fence ran from the hill to the river like two arms, and there were three gates, one just by the hill, and one on each end of the river face.

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Behind Shemmaga the country was under the rule of a robber chief called Maung Yaing, who could raise from among the peasants some two hundred or three hundred men, armed mostly with flint-locks. He had been in the king's time a brigand with a small number of followers, who defied or eluded the local authorities, and lived free in quarters among the most distant villages. Like many a robber chief in our country and elsewhere, he was liked rather than hated by the people, for his brutalities were confined to either strangers or personal enemies, and he was open-handed and generous. We look upon things now with different eyes to what we did two or three hundred years ago, but I dare say Maung Yaing was neither better nor worse than many a hero of ours long ago. He was a fairly good fighter, and had a little experience fighting the king's troops; and so it was very natural, when the machinery of government fell like a house of cards, and some leaders were wanted, that the young men should crowd to him, and put themselves under his orders. He had usually with him forty or fifty men, but he could, as I have said, raise five or six times as many for any particular service, and keep them together for a few days. He very soon discovered that he and his men were absolutely no match for our troops.

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In two or three attempts that he made to oppose the troops he was signally worsted, so he was obliged to change his tactics. He decided to boycott the enemy. No Burman was to accept service under him, to give him information or supplies, to be his guide, or to assist him in any way. This rule Maung Yaing made generally known, and he announced his intention of enforcing it with rigour. And he did so. There was a head man of a village near Shemmaga whom he executed because he had acted as guide to a body of troops, and he cut off all supplies from the interior, lying on the roads, and stopping all men from entering Shemmaga. He further issued a notice that the inhabitants of Shemmaga itself should leave the town. They could not move the garrison, therefore the people must move themselves. No assistance must be given to the enemy. The villagers of Shemmaga, mostly small traders in salt and rice, were naturally averse to leaving. This trade was their only means of livelihood, the houses their only homes, and they did not like the idea of going out into the unknown country behind. Moreover, the exaction by Maung Yaing of money and supplies for his men fell most heavily on the wealthier men, and on the whole they were not sorry to have the English garrison in the town, so that they could trade in peace. Some few left, but most did not, and though they collected money, and sent it to Maung Yaing, they at the same time told the English officer in command of Maung Yaing's threats, and begged that great care should be taken of the town, for Maung Yaing was very angry. When he found he could not cause the

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abandonment of the town, he sent in word to say that he would burn it. Not three hundred foreigners, nor three thousand, should protect these lazy, unpatriotic folk from his vengeance. He gave them till the new moon of a certain month, and if the town were not evacuated by that time he declared that he would destroy it. He would burn it down, and kill certain men whom he mentioned, who had been the principal assistants of the foreigners. This warning was quite public, and came to the ears of the English officer almost at once. When he heard it he laughed.

He had three hundred men, and the rebels had three hundred. His were all magnificently trained and drilled troops, men made for war; the Burmans were peasants, unarmed, untrained. He could have defeated three thousand of them, or ten times that number, with his little force, and so, of course, he could if he met them in the open; no one knew that better, by bitter experience, than Maung Yaing. The villagers, too, knew, but nevertheless they were stricken with fear, for Maung Yaing was a man of his word. He was as good as his threat.

One night, at midnight, the face of the fort where the Ghurkas lived on the hill was suddenly attacked. Out of the brushwood near by a heavy fire was opened upon the breastwork, and there was shouting and beating of gongs. So all the Ghurkas turned out in a hurry, and ran to man the breastwork, and the return fire became hot and heavy. In a moment, as it seemed, the attackers were in the village. They had burst in the north gate by the river face, killed the guard on it, and streamed in.

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They lit torches from a fire they found burning, and in a moment the village was on fire. Looking down from the hill, you could see the village rushing into flame, and in the lurid light men and women and children running about wildly. There were shouts and screams and shots. No one who has never heard it, never seen it, can know what a village is like when the enemy has burst in at night. Everyone is mad with hate, with despair, with terror. They run to and fro, seeking to kill, seeking to escape being killed. No one can tell one from another. The bravest man is dismayed. And the noise is like a great moan coming out of the night, pierced with sharp cries. It rises and falls, like the death-cry of a dying giant. It is the most terrible sound in the world. It makes the heart stop.

To the Ghurkas this sight and sound came all of a sudden, as they were defending what they took to be a determined attack on their own position. The village was lost ere they knew it was attacked. And two steamers full of troops, anchored off the town, saw it, too. They were on their way up country, and had halted there that night, anchored in the stream. They were close by, but could not fire, for there was no telling friend from foe.

And before the relief party of Ghurkas could come swarming down the hill, only two hundred yards, before the boats could land the eager troops from the steamers, the rebels were gone. They went through the village and out of the south gate. They had fulfilled their threat and destroyed the town. They had killed the men they had declared they would kill. The firing died away from the fort side,

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and the enemy were gone, no one could tell whither,
into the night.

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Such a scene of desolation as that village was
next day! It was all destroyed—every house. All
the food was gone, all furniture, all clothes, every-
thing, and here and there was a corpse in among
the blackened cinders. The whole countryside was
terror-stricken at this failure to defend those who
had depended on us.

I do not think this was a particularly gallant act,
but it was a very able one. It was certainly war.
It taught us a very severe lesson—more severe than
a personal reverse would have been. It struck terror
in the countryside. The memory of it hampered us
for very long; even now they often talk of it. It was
a brutal act—that of a brigand, not a soldier.

But there was no want of courage. If these men,
inferior in number, in arms, in everything, could do
this under the lead of a robber chief, what would
they not have done if well led, if well trained, if
well armed?

Of desperate encounters between our troops and
the insurgents I could tell many a story. I have
myself seen such fights. They nearly always ended
in our favour—how could it be otherwise?

There was Ta Te, who occupied a pagoda en-
closure with some eighty men, and was attacked by
our mounted infantry. There was a long fight in that
hot afternoon, and very soon the insurgents' ammuni-
tion began to fail, and the pagoda was stormed.
Many men were killed, and Ta Te, when his men
were nearly all dead, and his ammunition quite ex-
pended, climbed up the pagoda wall, and twisted off

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721 pieces of the cement and threw them at the troops.
157 He would not surrender—not he—and he was killed.
701 There were many like him. The whole war was
little affairs of this kind—a hundred, three hundred,
of our men, and much the same, or a little more,
of theirs. They only once or twice raised a force
of two thousand men. Nothing can speak more
forcibly of their want of organization than this.
The whole country was pervaded by bands of fifty
or a hundred men, very rarely amounting to more
than two hundred, and no two bands ever acted in
concert.

It is probable that most of the best men of the
country were against us. It is certain, I think, that
of those who openly joined us and accompanied us
in our expedition, very, very few were other than
men who had some private grudge to avenge, or
some purpose to gain, by opposing their own people.
Of such as these you cannot expect very much.
And yet there were exceptions—men who showed
up all the more brilliantly because they were excep-
tions—men whom I shall always honour. There
were two I remember best of all. They are both
dead now.

722 One was the eldest son of the hereditary governor
642 of a part of the country called Kawlin. It is in
631 the north-west of Upper Burma, and bordered on
a semi-independent state called Wuntho. In the
troubles that occurred after the deposition of King
Thibaw, the Prince of Wuntho thought that he
would be able to make for himself an independent
kingdom, and he began by annexing Kawlin. So
the governor had to flee, and with him his sons, and

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naturally enough they joined our columns when we advanced in that direction, hoping to be replaced. They were replaced, the father as governor under the direction of an English magistrate, and the son as his assistant. They were only kept there by our troops, and upheld in authority by our power against Wuntho. But they were desired by many of their own people, and so, perhaps, they could hardly be called traitors, as many of those who joined us were. The father was a useless old man, but his son, he of whom I speak, was brave and honourable, good tempered and courteous, beyond most men whom I have met. It was well known that he was the real power behind his father. It was he who assisted us in an attempt to quell the insurrections and catch the raiders that troubled our peace, and many a time they tried to kill him, many a time to murder him as he slept.

There was a large gang of insurgents who came across the Mu River one day, and robbed one of his villages, so a squadron of cavalry was sent in pursuit. We travelled fast and long, but we could not catch the raiders. We crossed the Mu into unknown country, following their tracks, and at last, being without guides, we camped that night in a little monastery in the forest. At midnight we were attacked. A road ran through our camp, and there was a picket at each end of the road, and sentries were doubled.

It was just after midnight that the first shot was fired. We were all asleep when a sudden volley was poured into the south picket, killing one sentry and wounding another. There was no time to dress,

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and we ran down the steps as we were (in sleeping dresses), to find the men rapidly falling in, and the horses kicking at their pickets. It was pitch-dark. The monastery was on a little cleared space, and there was forest all round that looked very black. Just as we came to the foot of the steps an outbreak of firing and shouts came from the north, and the Burmese tried to rush our camp from there; then they tried to rush it again from the south, but all their attempts were baffled by the steadiness of the pickets and the reinforcements that were running up. So the Burmese, finding the surprise ineffectual, and that the camp could not be taken, spread themselves about in the forest in vantage places, and fired into the camp. Nothing could be seen except the dazzling flashes from their guns as they fired here and there, and the darkness was all the darker for those flashes of flame, that cut it like swords. It was very cold. I had left my blanket in the monastery, and no one was allowed to ascend, because there, of all places, the bullets flew thickest, crushing through the mat walls, and going into the teak posts with a thud. There was nothing we could do. The men, placed in due order about the camp, fired back at the flashes of the enemy's guns. That was all they had to fire at. It was not much guide. The officers went from picket to picket encouraging the men, but I had no duty; when fighting began my work as a civilian was at a standstill. I sat and shivered with cold under the monastery, and wished for the dawn. In a pause of the firing you could hear the followers hammering the pegs that held the foot-ropes of the horses. Then the dead

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and wounded were brought and put near me, and in the dense dark the doctor tried to find out what injuries the men had received, and dress them as well as he could. No light dare be lit. The night seemed interminable. There were no stars, for a dense mist hung above the trees. After an hour or two the firing slackened a little, and presently, with great caution, a little lamp, carefully shrouded with a blanket, was lit. A sudden burst of shots that came splintering into the posts beside us caused the lamp to be hurriedly put out; but presently it was lit again, and with infinite caution one man was dressed. At last a little very faint silver dawn came gleaming through the tree-tops—the most beautiful sight I ever saw—and the firing stopped. The dawn came quickly down, and very soon we were able once more to see what we were about, and count our losses.

Then we moved out. We had hardly any hope of catching the enemy, we who were in a strange country, who were mounted on horses, and had a heavy transport, and they who knew every stream and ravine, and had every villager for a spy. So we moved back a march into a more open country, where we hoped for better news, and two days later that news came.

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CHAPTER VI

WAR—II

'Never in the world does hatred cease by hatred. Hatred ceases by love.'—*Dhammapada*.

721 WE were camped at a little monastery in some fields by a village, with a river in front. Up in the monastery there was but room for the officers, so small was it, and the men were camped beneath it in little shelters. It was two o'clock, and very hot, and we were just about to take tiffin, when news came that a party of armed men had been seen passing a little north of us. It was supposed they were bound to a village known to be a very bad one—Laka—and that they would camp there. So 'boot and saddle' rang from the trumpets, and in a few moments later we were off, fifty lances. Just as we started, his old Hindostani Christian servant came up to my friend, the commandant, and gave him a little paper. 'Put it in your pocket, sahib,' he said. The commandant had no time to talk, no time even to look at what it could be. He just crammed it into his breast-pocket, and we rode on. The governor's son was our guide,

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and he led us through winding lanes into a pass in the low hills. The road was very narrow, and the heavy forest came down to our elbows as we passed. Now and again we crossed the stream, which had but little water in it, and the path would skirt its banks for awhile. It was beautiful country, but we had no time to notice it then, for we were in a hurry, and whenever the road would allow we trotted and cantered. After five or six miles of this we turned a spur of the hills, and came out into a little grass-glade on the banks of the stream, and at the far end of this was the village where we expected to find those whom we sought. They saw us first, having a look-out on a high tree by the edge of the forest; and as our advanced guard came trotting into the open, he fired. The shot echoed far up the hills like an angry shout, and we could see a sudden stir in the village—men running out of the houses with guns and swords, and women and children running, too, poor things! sick with fear. They fired at us from the village fence, but had no time to close the gate ere our sowars were in. Then they escaped in various ways to the forest and scrub, running like madmen across the little bit of open, and firing at us directly they reached shelter where the cavalry could not come. Of course, in the open they had no chance, but in the dense forest they were safe enough. The village was soon cleared, and then we had to return. It was no good to wait. The valley was very narrow, and was commanded from both its sides, which were very steep and dense with forest. Beyond the village there was only forest

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721 again. We had done what we could: we had inflicted a very severe punishment on them; it was no good waiting, so we returned. They fired on us nearly all the way, hiding in the thick forest, and perched on high rocks. At one place our men had to be dismounted to clear a breastwork, run up to fire at us from. All the forest was full of voices—voices of men and women and even children—cursing our guide. They cried his name, that the spirits of the hills might remember that it was he who had brought desolation to their village. Figures started up on pinnacles of cliff, and cursed him as we rode by. Us they did not curse; it was our guide.

And so after some trouble we got back. That band never attacked us again.

As we were dismounting, my friend put his hand in his pocket, and found the little paper. He took it out, looked at it, and when his servant came up to him he gave the paper back with a curious little smile full of many thoughts. 'You see,' he said, 'I am safe. No bullet has hit me.' And the servant's eyes were dim. He had been very long with his master, and loved him, as did all who knew him. 'It was the goodness of God,' he said—'the great goodness of God. Will not the sahib keep the paper?' But the sahib would not. 'You may need it as well as I. Who can tell in this war?' And he returned it.

And the paper? It was a prayer—a prayer used by the Roman Catholic Church, printed on a sheet of paper. At the top was a red cross. The paper was old and worn, creased at the edges; it

had evidently been much used, much read. Such was the charm that kept the soldier from danger.

The nights were cold then, when the sun had set, and after dinner we used to have a camp-fire built of wood from the forest, to sit round for a time and talk before turning in. The native officers of the cavalry would come and sit with us, and one or two of the Burmans, too. We were a very mixed assembly. I remember one night very well—I think it must have been the very night after the fight at Laka, and we were all of us round the fire. I remember there was a half-moon bending towards the west, throwing tender lights upon the hills, and turning into a silver gauze the light white mist that lay upon the rice-fields. Opposite to us, across the little river, a ridge of hill ran down into the water that bent round its foot. The ridge was covered with forest, very black, with silver edges on the skyline. It was out of range for a Burmese flint-gun, or we should not have camped so near it. On all the other sides the fields stretched away till they ended in the forest that gloomed beyond. I was talking to the governor's son (our guide of the fight at Laka) of the prospects of the future, and of the intentions of the Prince of Wuntho, in whose country Laka lay. I remarked to him how the Burmans of Wuntho seemed to hate him, of how they had cursed him from the hills, and he admitted that it was true. 'All except my friends,' he said, 'hate me. And yet what have I done? I had to help my father to get back his governorship. They forget that they attacked us first.'

He went on to tell me of how every day he was

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721 threatened, of how he was sure they would murder
634 him some time, because he had joined us. 'They
are sure to kill me some time,' he said. He seemed
sad and depressed, not afraid.

So we talked on, and I asked him about charms.
'Are there not charms that will prevent you being
hurt if you are hit, and that will not allow a sword
to cut you? We hear of invulnerable men. There
were the Immortals of the King's Guard, for instance.'

721 And he said, yes, there were charms, but no one
751 believed in them except the villagers. He did not,
nor did men of education. Of course, the ignorant
people believed in them. There were several sorts
of charms. You could be tattooed with certain
mystic letters that were said to insure you against
being hit, and there were certain medicines you
could drink. There were also charms made out of
stone, such as a little tortoise he had once seen
that was said to protect its wearer. There were
mysterious writings on palm-leaves. There were
men, he said vaguely, who knew how to make
these things. For himself, he did not believe in
them.

779 I tried to learn from him then, and I have tried
751 from others since, whether these charms have any
connection with Buddhism. I cannot find that they
have. They are never in the form of images of the
Buddha, or of extracts from the sacred writings.
There is not, so far as I can make out, any religious
significance in these charms; mostly they are simply
mysterious. I never heard that the people connect
them with their religion. Indeed, all forms of en-
chantment and of charms are most strictly prohibited.

VI

WAR

There is no flexibility in Buddhism. It is a law,
and nothing can change it. Laws are for ever and
for ever, and there are no exceptions to them. The
law of the Buddha is against war—war of any kind
at all—and there can be no exception. And so
every Burman who fought against us knew that he
was sinning. He did it with his eyes open; he
could never imagine any exception in his favour.
Never could he in his bivouac look at the stars, and
imagine that any power looked down in approbation
of his deeds. No one fought for him. Our bayonets
and lances were no keys to open to him the gates of
paradise; no monks could come and close his dying
eyes with promises of rewards to come. He was
sinning, and he must suffer long and terribly for this
breach of the laws of righteousness.

If such be the faith of the people, and if they
believe their faith, it is a terrible handicap to them
in any fight: it delivers them bound into the hands
of the enemy. And such is Buddhism.

But it must never be forgotten that, if this faith
does not assist the believer in defence, neither does
it in offence. What is so terrible as a war of religion?
There can never be a war of Buddhism.

No ravished country has ever borne witness to
the prowess of the followers of the Buddha; no
murdered men have poured out their blood on their
hearth-stones, killed in his name; no ruined women
have cursed his name to high Heaven. He and his
faith are clean of the stain of blood. He was the
preacher of the Great Peace, of love, of charity, of
compassion, and so clear is his teaching that it can
never be misunderstood. Wars of invasion, the
Burmese have waged, that is true, in Siam, in

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779 Assam, and in Pegu. They are but men, and men
●721 will fight. If they were perfect in their faith the
race would have died out long ago. They have
fought, but they have never fought in the name of
their faith. They have never been able to prostitute
its teachings to their own wants. Whatever the
Burmans have done, they have kept their faith pure.
When they have offended against the laws of the
Buddha they have done so openly. Their souls are
guiltless of hypocrisy, for whatever that may avail
them; they have known the difference between
good and evil, even if they have not always followed
the good.